



In Transit May/June 2013

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the desk
of the General
Manager*

Investing in the future

As this edition of *In Transit* goes to press, our financial future is uncertain. The State Legislature is debating whether to pass a transportation package and provide King County with a local funding option to preserve Metro service. In May, I met with many of you at “town hall” events held at our various facilities to discuss the budget shortfall. I enjoyed responding to your questions and concerns, and I hope you found the discussions as informative and helpful as I did.

Despite this financial uncertainty, we must continue to plan for Metro’s future—which I believe is still bright. We are one of the most dynamic and innovative transit agencies in the country, and with our strategic plan to guide us, we will remain an outstanding example of how public organizations can effectively and efficiently serve their communities. To do this, we must invest now in the future success of our staff members.

By 2017, about a quarter of Metro’s current work force will be retired or eligible to retire. This turnover represents a huge loss of historical knowledge and experience, but it will also provide opportunities to advance careers and develop our future leaders.

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Metro’s Al Ramey drives into the record books

When Al Ramey drove his Route 150 bus back to South Base on the morning of April 12, he drove into record books for Metro—and possibly the country.

As he safely completed yet another trip, Ramey also marked 50 years of safe driving. He might be the only driver ever to earn that distinction for a transit agency in the U.S.

As he pulled into the base, cheers erupted from a crowd of coworkers, family members, and friends gathered to celebrate his accomplishment. His destination sign was reprogrammed as he arrived to read “Al Ramey 50 Years Safe Driving.”

First to congratulate him was Ruth, his wife of 54 years, who handed him a new Metro jacket with a fresh patch marking the big day. As it turns out, safe driving patches are only available up to 45 years, so a custom patch had to be made for this occasion.

Operations Manager Jim O’Rourke said he recently rode along with Ramey “to see what it was like to ride with a master.” He described Ramey as “a joy to watch in action.”

“He had all sorts of comments as he drove along about how we could make things better (improve the deadhead route at the Kent rail station, how



South Base Operator Al Ramey sets a new record for safe driving.

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Performance corner

Customer satisfaction is a Metro priority

Metro's focus on customer service is reflected in our long history of customer research, including on-board rider surveys before and after major service changes and annual telephone surveys. The results help us understand how well we're doing, assess new products and opportunities, and identify areas we should focus on to improve customer satisfaction. We did our most recent telephone survey last fall, shortly after the huge fall service change (perhaps the largest in Metro history) and the end of the Ride Free Area.

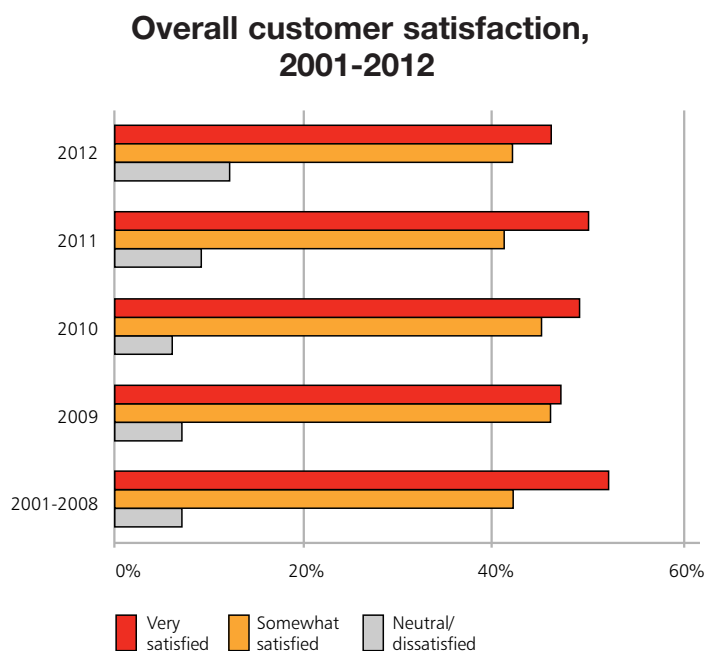
A large majority (88 percent) of Metro riders still said they were satisfied with Metro overall, but this percentage has trended downward since 2010, followed by a small but statistically significant decline in 2012.

Results for specific elements of our service don't shed much light on this decline in overall satisfaction. Since 2010, riders have been significantly more satisfied with tunnel safety, the safety of waiting and riding at night, and how drivers handle incidents on the bus. But they're less satisfied with seat availability, and those who transfer are less satisfied with their wait times when transferring.

The magnitude of the fall 2012 service change may have played a role in the decline in overall satisfaction. Customer complaints are always highest

after a fall service change, but they jumped more than 50 percent from 2011 to 2012. The massive scale of the service change, and media attention to initial problems with overcrowding and on-time performance, may have colored riders' perceptions of Metro's overall performance, even though those same riders remained equally satisfied with almost all specific elements of their transit service.

We also asked riders about the end of the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. While a majority said they were satisfied with how well Metro handled the significant change in service, they gave their highest ratings to how well informed they were about this service change, rather than the actual management of the change itself.



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General Manager

Metro has a history of promoting from within and helping our employees achieve their maximum potential. This has served us well in the past, providing us with many talented and highly motivated candidates when opportunities arise. It's a tradition we want to sustain and improve upon, creating greater access to opportunities and ensuring that the depth and diversity of our organization is fully represented in our leadership.

It's in our best interest to support and develop our employees, increase their competitiveness for promotional and leadership opportunities, and prepare them to make even greater contributions to our future. To help keep us one of the most innovative, successful public transportation agencies in North America, we've started a Workforce Development program.

The new program, led by **Jonathan Halperin**, is focusing on getting staff input, developing internship and mentoring programs, providing leadership development, carrying out succession planning, and providing career development training and opportunities. It will take some time for the program's elements to roll out, but my goal for the next couple of years is to create broad-based programs to tap into the talent in this organization and assure our future success.

Speaking of talent and success, before closing I want to draw your attention to our cover story about Operator **Al Ramey**, who recently marked a half-century of safe driving with Metro. His achievement highlights a long, successful, and continuing career, and I offer him my heartfelt congratulations—and my thanks.

—Kevin Desmond, General Manager

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Al Ramey drives into the record books

ORCA should handle zone changes, etc.), in addition to driving the bus safely and providing good service to his customers,” O’Rourke said.

Ramey, who is 81, began driving for Seattle Transit in 1952. He later drove for Suburban and Metropolitan Transit, which merged with Seattle Transit to become Metro in 1973. He retired as a full-time driver and came back as a part-timer in 2001.

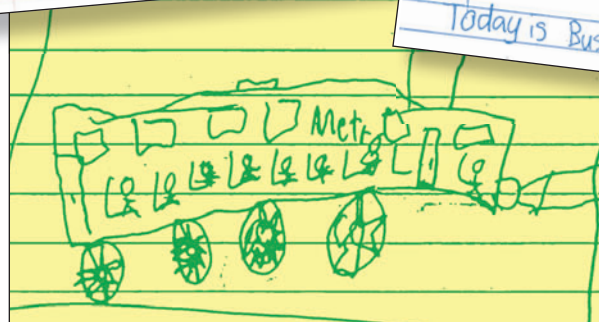
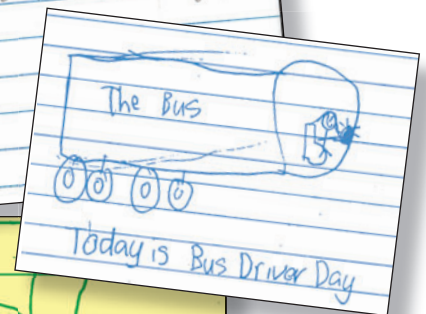
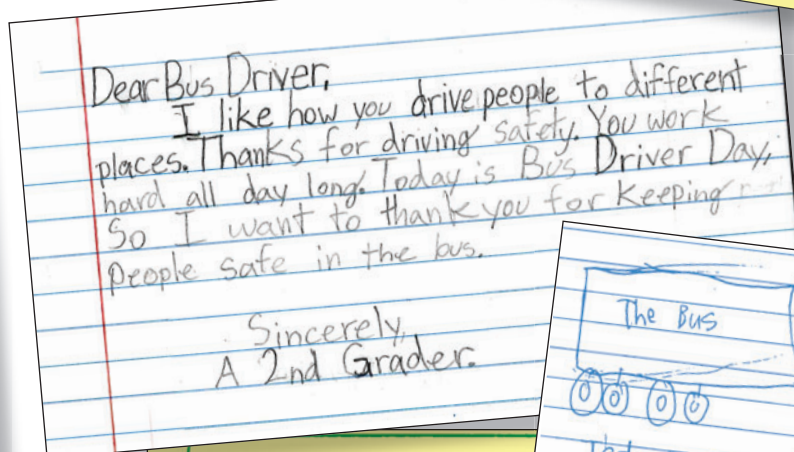
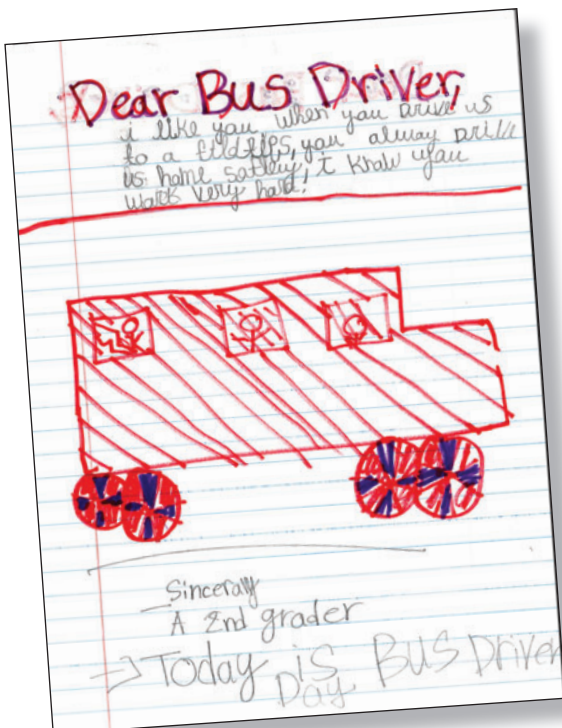
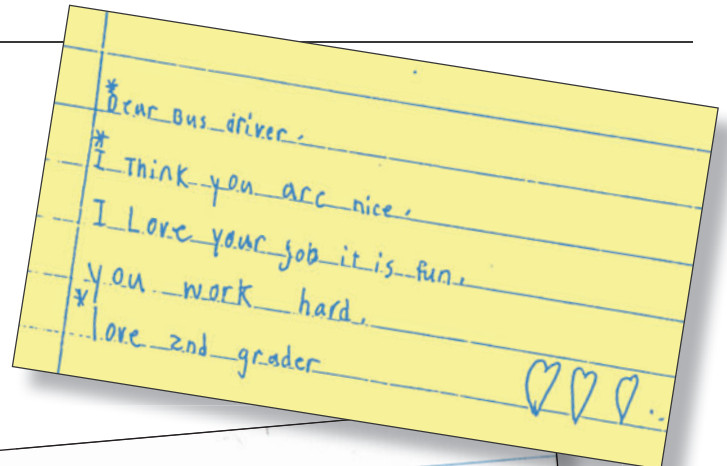
“It takes dedication and common sense to be a safe driver,” Ramey said. And although plenty of people had known the big day was approaching, he tried not to let the pressure get to him. “I just drove the way I always drive,” he said.



King County Transportation Director Harold Taniguchi congratulates South Base Operator Al Ramey as he completed his record-breaking run of safe driving.

Kids show appreciation

One day in March, a Metro driver at a bus stop was handed a large envelope by someone who didn’t stop to explain. The envelope turned out to be full of heartwarming letters of appreciation written by a second-grade class in honor of Bus Driver Appreciation Day (March 18). “They’ve clearly learned Metro’s mission,” said Operations Manager Jim O’Rourke, “safety, service, and schedule—in that order!”



KUDOS

IN TRANSIT



Operator Mechelle Penny holds the Safety Award trophy as (L-R) Safety Superintendent Darryl Russell, Operations Manager Jim O'Rourke, South Base Superintendent Suzanne Keyport, and South Base chiefs Cheryl Washington and Michael Stewart celebrate South Base's win.

■ **South Base wins safety award**
– South Base celebrated its win of the 2012 base safety award with an all-day cookout in April. The base reduced preventable accidents by 4 percent from its rate in 2011. Each year, the operating base with the most-improved accident record is recognized for its achievement with

a breakfast or barbecue prepared and served by the supervisors from the other bases. South Base is now a six-time winner, having also been honored in 1984, 1992, 1998, 2001, and 2003 (the contest began in 1982).

■ **Rail Rodeo results** – On March 23, Metro's Rail Section held its third annual rail rodeo, followed by a barbecue served by Sound Transit executives. Eight rail operators—the most yet—vied for a chance to go to the American Public Transportation Association's International Rail Rodeo in Philadelphia on May 30. They competed in four events: uniform inspection, safety, train inspection, and simulated operation.

First-place winner **Bryan Mathews** scored his second victory; he also won Metro's inaugural rail rodeo in 2011. **Jeff Doppmann** finished second, and **Kevin Gumke** came in third. In separate competition, Rail VM electro-mechanics were tested on electrical and mechanical knowledge, troubleshooting, diagnostic abilities, safety awareness, and procedures. The winners, **Brian Shupe** (first), **Nick Keolker** (second), and **James Salisbury** (third), will also compete in Philadelphia.

■ **Feel the love** – Feeling unappreciated? Check out Metro Fan Mail, a new feature on Metro's home page that shares customer compliments. It isn't hard to find people grouching about us—and just about everything else—online, so Fan Mail provides a little balance by pointing out the positive. One example: "I salute pretty much all your drivers, but this one was particularly amazing....He was enjoying the ride himself, and it was contagious." Another: "WOW—the new schedule designs you are testing are the best thing Metro has done on the website since the site redesign where you put Trip Planner and other key functions on the home page....Easy to read and easy to print. Thanks!"

Transit operators of the month

April 2013

Atlantic Base: **Nathan Vass**
Bellevue Base: **Eddie Nelson**
Central Base: **Kam Chan**
East Base: **Vickie Stanley**
North Base: **Galen Butcher**
Ryerson Base: **Billy McKinion**
South Base: **Charles Barich**

May 2013

Atlantic Base: **Ruby Carlisle**
Bellevue Base: **Isaiah Mahmood**
Central Base: **Scott Dilley**
East Base: **Stephen Tanasse**
North Base: **Michael Biderbost**
Ryerson Base: **Dwayne Love**
South Base: **Paul Kelley**



Rail Operations Rodeo team contestants (l-r) Bigyan Pratap, Claude Brown, Jeff Doppmann (kneeling), Jeff Morgan, Doug Thomson (partially hidden), winner Bryan Mathews, Don Brady, Kevin Gumke



Vanpool #110 is (L to R) Dave Ruddies, 2013 Rideshare Volunteer of the Year Rick Bojorquez, Tim Witthauer, Bachyen Le, Katie Ryan, Bill Pick, and Ken Cadieux.

■ Rideshare Volunteer of the

Year – As the sun rose on Earth Day, April 22, Rideshare honored Rick Bojorquez as its first Volunteer of the Year with a certificate and a \$50 gift card. Bojorquez was honored for being a safe driver and for his skill in coordinating a 15-passenger vanpool with an 80-mile daily commute over the past 20 years. Rideshare employees chose 10 finalists from 110 nominations submitted by commuter van participants, and winners were chosen by a celebrity panel of traffic and news reporters. Second- and third-place winners Jason Madlung and Prashant Gupta received \$25 gift certificates. The 10 finalists are featured on Rideshare's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/KCMetroVans).

■ Miller completes mechanic

apprentice program – In January, **Eric Miller** became the 70th graduate of Metro's grueling four-year mechanic apprenticeship. For six quarters, he attended a college diesel program for five hours and worked for six-and-a-half hours every day. After finishing the college program, he worked a regular eight-hour day for the remainder of his apprenticeship. The program started in 1976 under a joint agreement between Metro and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587. Sixteen graduates have been promoted to lead mechanic, maintenance analyst, chief, and superintendent. Metro



Eric Miller

also has a two-year program in which apprentices are hired after they've already completed a two-year college-level diesel or automotive program on their own, and serve two years as apprentices to gain hands-on experience.

Service award achievements

The following employees achieved major service milestones in the second quarter of 2013.

Design and Construction — **Alejandro Marin**
Power and Facilities — **Phillip Johnson**
Service Development — **Randall Kelley**
Transit Operations — **Edward Alexander, James Barnes, Julia Cannon, Gordon Guhl, Darren Lucchini, Stafford Williams**
Vehicle Maintenance — **Jeffrey Anderson**



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On the Move

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Ondrea Galloway, customer service specialist III (RO) — April 8

Priscilla Vargas, manager — June 3

Power and Facilities

Robert Awford, transit custodian II — March 11

Eric Smith, transit custodian II — November 12

Bradley Burgin, facilities utility laborer — April 8

Rail

Denis Agasid, facilities electrician — March 20

Steven Bill, rail electro-mechanic — March 11

Marlon Ferido, rail electro-mechanic — March 11

Sean Graham, rail facilities custodian (TLT) — March 4

Steven Helm, rail laborer — March 1

Steven Kryzsko, rail laborer, March 7

Nikolas Vrsek, rail facilities electrician — March 18

Gilbert Winslow, administrative specialist III (TLT) — March 4

Transit Human Resources

James Moreau, employee and labor relations representative — May 1 (replaces retired **Vashti Curtis**)

Vehicle Maintenance

Evan Duvall, equipment service worker — March 11

Maggie Halter, chief (Electronic Shop) — March 20

Anthony Kurosu, mechanic — March 11

Karl Urwiler, acting transit purchasing specialist — March 4

In Our Thoughts

Michael Flickinger, transit operator (10+ years), passed away on March 1

SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division

■ RapidRide ridership still

growing — The four RapidRide lines in operation show ridership gains compared to pre-RapidRide levels in the same corridors. Ridership on the A Line has gone up 48 percent to 8,200 daily riders. B line ridership is up 14 percent to 5,800 riders on weekdays. C Line ridership is up 44 percent to 6,700 weekday riders, and D line ridership is up 12 percent to 8,500 weekday riders.



More and more people are doing this.

■ RapidRide E and F line schedules

revised — The start dates for the last two of Metro's six planned RapidRide routes—the E line and the F line—have been pushed back from September 2013 to February and June of 2014, respectively. This will give us time to upgrade more than 100 bus stops and stations as well as transit signals at more than 60 intersections. Also, major street and regional transit projects that are underway in the future F Line corridor will not be finished until spring 2014. The new launch dates have support from local jurisdictions and the public.

■ Transit Incentive Program

continues to grow — Requests for free Metro bus tickets or donations of ticket value in January and February were up 79.5 percent and 46.4 percent,



Ads on Metro buses let riders know about the Transit Incentive Program.

respectively, over monthly levels for 2012. By the end of February, the eight-month-old program had provided 463,344 free-ride tickets to residents and the equivalent value of 126,752 tickets to the King County human service ticket program. Recent changes have increased the program's visibility to those receiving license tabs, and promotional ads started running on Metro buses in April.

■ KING 5 rides along with Metro's oldest driver

— At 86, Everett "Laury" Minard is Metro's oldest driver. Television station KING 5 recently rode Laury's bus to learn more about him and why he loves his job. Laury is a tremendous ambassador for King County and Metro Transit. During his 28 years working at Metro, he's earned 33 commendations and a 20-year safe driving award. "Every day I say a little prayer of thanks for their letting me come to work and being able to come to work," Laury told KING 5. "It's a real gift and a privilege." See the report at <http://bit.ly/WQqvsp>.

■ Metropool tops 100,000 gas-

free miles — Metro's Rideshare Operations group launched the nation's first 100-percent electric vehicle (EV) vanpool program about a year and a half ago. Fifteen months

after its inaugural run, Metro's vanpool fleet of 20 zero-emission Nissan Leaf sedans were still running strong, delivering a cleaner, greener commute to the region. Metropool vehicles save almost 2,000 gallons of gas per month—nearly double what participants save when sharing the ride in a traditional vanpool. They also prevent 18 metric tons of greenhouse gases from entering the air each month, compared to the 11 tons saved regular vanpools. "This program contributes to what is already one of the cleanest and greenest transit systems in North America," said Metro Transit General Manager **Kevin Desmond**.



"Gassing up" a Nissan Leaf—Metro now has 20 in its all-electric Metropool fleet.



Jim Kuchnsky

■ **Managing change** — After a 10-year leave of absence from Vehicle Maintenance, Lead Transit Parts Specialist **Jim Kuchnsky** returned to find everything about his job had changed and wrote an article about his experiences. “Even though I had 22 years with King County under my belt, I felt like a new hire,” Kuchnsky wrote. “This taught me some valuable lessons about change that are worth sharing: Try to get past the shock of the initial change and get to the core of why the change is (was) necessary. Look for the folks who have been successful at understanding and accepting the change, and ask them lots of questions. Realize that change is usually associated with progress, and progress usually means increased opportunities for cross-training, promotion, and a new focus. Lead, follow, or get out of the way...you can let change consume you or you can use it to create new opportunities.”

Security Sensitive



Having each other's back is a good thing

At the peak of the manhunt for the Boston Marathon bombers, the FBI was receiving 300,000 tips per minute. People wanted to help. Although it was all post-event, the “see something, say something” mindset was in full gear. Most of these tips were of little value, but the FBI was happy to sort through them all just to get at the one or two gems that would make a difference.

It's rare that neat, tightly bundled circumstances point out a dangerous person or situation. If it were that easy, life's hazards would be resolved as easily as in a TV show—from crime to punishment in the space of an hour. In the real world, it's usually something out of the ordinary that gets someone's attention: an odd behavior, heavy clothes that don't fit the day's weather, a van parked where it shouldn't be, or an out-of-place purse, bag, or box with no owner.

For this fragmented awareness of a situation that is about to unfold, we count on our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and customers. We count on them to be vigilant, and they count on us. We count on someone to say something that may result in turning a potentially bad situation into a non-event, which is far better than any post-event capture.

As a fan of irony, I'm always amazed when a bad guy gets caught for doing something really stupid *after* committing a major crime. Lee Harvey Oswald was caught after assassinating President Kennedy when he entered a movie theater without paying. Timothy McVeigh was pulled over after carrying out the Oklahoma City bombing for driving without license plates. And the two Boston Marathon bombers had blended back into the scenery until they broke cover, killed a police officer, and hijacked an SUV.

In our society, we tacitly agree to respect rules, pay our own way, and not hurt one another. Unfortunately, there are some among us who disregard these conventions and threaten the general order. To thrive, and sometimes just to survive, we need to have each other's backs.

Stay secure.

— **Mark L. Norton**

Manager, Transit Security and Emergency Management

Send comments and ideas on Metro security, emergency management, and homeland security to mark.norton@kingcounty.gov.

***In Transit* online**

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available at www.kingcounty.gov/InTransit.

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to ***In Transit***, KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Clemenger**: 206-263-6482 or anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov.

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ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

Retirements

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Diane Hildebrand, rideshare representative — June 1;
32 years
Robert Sahm, supervisor (Accessible Services) — June 3;
18 years

Power and Facilities

Peggy Meyer, superintendent (Facilities) — May 22; 31 years

Rail

Flennard Stelly, rail operator (Link) — March 1; 18 years

Transit Human Resources

Vashti Curtis, employee and labor relations representative —
April 1; 28 years

Transit Operations

Donna Burkhart, transit operator (South Base) — April 1;
29 years
Frederick Cunningham, transit operator (South Base) —
April 1; 32 years
William Saari, transit operator (South Base) — April 1;
29 years
Calvin Valentine, transit operator (South Base) — June 1;
41 years

Vehicle Maintenance

Martin Lull, mechanic — June 7; 33+ years

Promotions and Job Changes

General Manager's Office

Christine Anderson to assistant general manager from acting
deputy general manager

Metro Transit Police

Dave Jutilla to chief (major) from 911 Call Center (captain);
replaces Major **Lisa Mulligan**, now with the City of SeaTac

Power and Facilities

Carmen Steuby to transit custodian I (career service) from
TLT

Rail

Tedd Hankins to first hill streetcar activation manager from
superintendent of way, power and signals
Matthew Masuoka to rail operator from transit operator

Gabe Rukeyser to rail operations chief from rail technical
trainer

David Vestal to rail operations chief from rail supervisor

Service Development

Candida Lorenzana to transportation planner III from
transportation planner II (Strategic Planning and Analysis)

Transit Human Resources

Travis Butcher to human resource analyst from records
management specialist

Ivette Martinez-Morales to human resource analyst from
human resource associate

Transit Operations

Chris Bridgeman to first-line supervisor-in-training from
transit operator

Brian Eggen to first-line supervisor from supervisor-in-
training

Arthur Kinney to first-line supervisor-in-training from
transit operator

Aaron Lewis to first-line supervisor-in-training from transit
operator

J.F. Olander to first-line supervisor-in-training from transit
operator

Reginald Paul to first-line supervisor from supervisor-in-
training

Stephen St. Aubin to first-line supervisor from supervisor-
in-training

Mike Sudduth to administrator IV from business/finance
officer III

Dustin Toms to first-line supervisor from supervisor-in-
training

Carlos Womack to first-line supervisor from supervisor-in-
training

Greg Woodfill to first-line supervisor from supervisor-in-
training

Transit Safety

Sandra Dodge to safety officer (safety and health
administrator IV) from rail superintendent (Link)

New Hires

General Manager's Office

Rob Gannon, deputy general manager — May 9

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